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SUBJECT: MADAGASCAR: FRENCH SUPPORT POLITICAL CONSENSUS
LEADING TO ELECTIONS

REF: A. EMBASSY ANTANANARIVO-KANEDA E-MAIL (JUNE 23)
[1](#)B. PARIS 815

Classified By: Acting Minister Counselor for Political Affairs Andrew Young, 1.4 (b/d).

[1](#)1. (C/NF) SUMMARY: France continues to favor a political consensus among contending parties that would lead to credible elections, Presidential AF-advisor Remi Marechaux said on June 23. However, neither Rajoelina, Ravalomanana (who is recruiting mercenaries in France), nor Ratsiraka are making any conciliatory gestures. The international community needs to continue pressuring them. SADC's recent policy shift is helpful, as is its naming of Joaquim Chissano as SADC mediator for Madagascar; the next International Contact Meeting should take place in Antananarivo. Marechaux denied rumors indicating that France was providing a military plane to the HAT; he said that bilateral relations were in a "gray zone," with the new French Ambassador not yet having presented his credentials. Marechaux said that France was abiding by the EU's strictures against "no new non-humanitarian assistance," which the EU was enforcing strictly. The GOF is trying its best not to embroil itself in the dispute over control over Madagascar's embassy in Paris. Marechaux labeled French businessman and behind-the-scenes fixer Robert Bourgi as an opportunist with little experience in Madagascar, who was asked to involve himself by Franco-Malgache insider Patrick Lelu (phonetic).
END SUMMARY.

CONSENSUS LEADING TO ELECTIONS IS NECESSARY

[1](#)2. XXXXXXXXXXXX

[1](#)11. (C/NF) As had his colleague Romain Serman (ref B, paras 7-11), Marechaux expressed discomfort with private businessman and behind-the-scenes fixer Robert Bourgi's apparent involvement in Madagascar. He said that Bourgi had no prior experience with Madagascar but had been asked to get involved by Patrick Lelu (phonetic), a Franco-Malgache businessman and advisor to several leading Malgache figures. Marechaux said that Bourgi, looking for new business after the death of Gabon's President Bongo, was eager to seek new opportunities in Madagascar. Marechaux repeated that Bourgi was not in any way associated with the GOF and was interested only in exploiting his own opportunities.

BERRY